A Research Proposal

On

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN INDIAN RETAIL INDUSTRY: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVE OF ORGANIZED RETAILERS AND CONSUMERS IN NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI

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Submitted by:	**Supervised by:**
Rajan Girdhar	Dr. Girish Taneja

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND APPLIED ARTS
LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY
PUNJAB

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1. INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF INDIAN RETAIL SECTOR

Indian's retail market is changing dynamically. So is the consumerism too. Indian retail is primarily dominated by a large number of small independent retailers, consisting of the local kirana shops, chemists, apparels store, owner-manned general store (small corner shops), and pavement vendors, which together make up the unorganized retail market and accounts for about 95 per cent of country's grocery retail sales. According to a report of Business Monitor International (2011), in 1999 India had three shopping malls, collectively covering less than 1 million square feet. By the end of 2006, the country had 137 shopping malls occupying 28 million square feet. In December 2008, it was estimated that there were more than 450 malls in India, accounting for at least 120 million square feet of retail space. Thus, rapid expansion of shopping malls across country is caused by the emerging organized retail formats which are transforming the face of retailing in India. Organized retail industry is one of the fastest growing industries in India. A.T Kearney's Global Retail Development Index (2011) ranked India fourth among the top 30 developing countries for retail expansion world-wide. Organized retail accounts for approximately 7 per cent of India's roughly $435 billion retail market and it is expected to reach 20 per cent by 2020. However, the global value of retail industry is estimated at $11.5 trillion and is expected to grow to $ 20 trillion by the year 2020 (Euromonitor, 2010). According to another report by BMI, India is expected to achieve the strongest rate of retail sales growth in the Asia Pacific region (China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore) over the forecast period between 2011 and 2015 with 98.3 per cent (table 1). Sathish and Venkatrama (2010) found that a number of factors that are driving India's retail market include: increase in the young working population, hefty pay packets, nuclear families in urban areas, increasing working women population and disposable income.

Table 1: Retail sales and forecasts for Indian market.

	Year wise retail sales and forecast (f) for India (in US $ billions, fixed 2008 FX rates)							
	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**12011f**	**2012f**	**2013f**	**2014f**	**2015f**
Annual retail sales growth	296.90	315.19	366.74	395.96	464.24	572.18	683.05	785.12

Source: Business Monitor International (BMI), Q3 2011

2. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: AN OVERVIEW

The rapid economic growth in the past years has triggered increasing consumers' consumption worldwide. Ramlogan (1997) anticipated that if irresponsible consumption habit continues, the environment degradation would worsen. The consequences of environmental degradation include global warming, depletion of stratospheric ozone layer, pollution of sea and rivers, noise and light pollution, acid rain desertification. The author has cited the reasons of environmental degradation and said that environmental changes may be driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. Environmental degradation is the result of the dynamic inter-play of socio-economic, institutional and technological activities. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), melting glaciers and disturbed rainfall patterns will increase the amount of water induced hazards such as floods, flash floods, landslides, debris flows and droughts. Moreover, Population growth and increasing demand for water (due not only to higher temperatures but also to higher standards of living) could adversely affect more than a billion people in the 2050s. Many researchers have cited increasing irresponsible consumption among the main reasons of environmental degradation. Francois (2006) has defined consumption as "the mean to consume, waste, squander, or destroy". Bhatta (2009) has argued that careless consumption and natural resource exploitation is increasing worldwide. The protection of earth's natural resources is important not only for survival of mankind, but also for the species; and not only for this generation, but for generations to follow. Chen & Chai (2010) argued that rapidly increasing consumption worldwide is the main cause of environmental deterioration. But, consumption is not always linked with environmental destruction and/ or squandering of scare natural resources. Degradation of natural resources can be a major obstacle for economic development. There has been increasing concern about the threat to the environment caused by economic growth and such concerns were expressed much earlier in the developed countries. According to Paltasingh (2011), whenever the issues of "environmental degradation" are discussed, usually developed countries are blamed for increasing industrial pollution for higher economic returns but now developing countries are also targeting towards uncontrolled economic development at the cost of environmental damage. Kumar *et al.* (2011) reasoned growing industrialization and globalization with

increasing numbers of multinationals among many reasons of environmental damage. Economic development and number of multinationals are not only responsible, but, also growing population in India is putting a strain on the environment, infrastructure, and the country's natural resources. However, the author has further suggested that responsible behavior of all the stakeholders is required to protect the environmental impact. Ishaswini & Datta (2011) argued that increasing awareness of global warming and adverse climate conditions, on the global level, has spurred people's interest toward sustainable development. According to a report by Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India, the World Bank assessment says that India contributes 16 per cent of the World's population but it is relatively low carbon economy emits only 4.6 per cent of the global CO_2 (carbon dioxide) emission. Whereas, another recently conducted study by researchers from Harvard, Princeton, Adelaide University and University of Singapore (2011), that is, based on evaluation of 'absolute' environment impact of 179 countries has named India as seventh most environmentally hazardous country in the world making India the world's third biggest CO_2 emitter. Brazil is ranked at the top of the list with worst environmental factors, followed by U.S. and China. It is evident that findings of these two reports leading to different outlook of India's carbon footprint. Minx *et al.* (2009) described "carbon footprint" as a purely consumption based concept and defined it as "the direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions required to satisfy a given consumption that can be a product, an activity or a set of products and activities".

2.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The beginning of Indian environmental laws was sown, at the United Nation's first major conference on international environmental issues, "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment" held at Stockholm in 1972. Since the 1970s an extensive work has been done to develop environment legislation in the country. Under the influence of conference declarations, the National Council for Environmental Policy and Planning was set up in 1972, which was evolved into a full-fledged Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in 1985. Today, it is an apex administrative body in the country for regulating and ensuring environmental protection.

Following are some of the legislation for environmental protection in India:

(a) Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and Cess Act, 1977

(b) Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, Amendment 1982

(c) The Wildfire (Protection) Act, 1972, Amendment 1991

(d) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (EPA)

(e) The National Environment Appellate Act, 1997

(f) National Environment Tribunal Act, 1995

India is signatory to a number of multilateral environment agreements (MEA) and conventions. Among others, the most important one is "The Montreal Protocol Vienna Convention" (1987) on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer came into force in 1989. The aim set in protocol was to reduce the consumption and production of a range of ozone depleting substances (ODS). The agreement acknowledged that certain counties have contributed to ozone depletion more than others, for which, the agreement set more stringent standards and timetables to reduce carbon emissions of those countries. The MoEF has established an Ozone Cell and a steering committee on the Montreal Protocol to facilitate implementation of planned programs, for phasing out ODS production by 2010. India signed another agreement on "United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change" (UNFCCC) in June 1992 with primary goals to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at levels that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interferences with the global climate. However, the reduction/limitation requirements were applied only to developed countries, but the only obligation for developing countries was to the construction of GHG inventory (base year 1994). The recent rise of judicial activism in the enforcement of environmental legislation is reflected through the increasing number of environment-related public litigation cases. During the 17th Conference of Parties (CoP), Durban, (December 7, 2011) Ms Jayanthi Natrajan, Minister of Environment & Forests (India) made statements that per capita emission in India is 1.7 tonnes per annum only. Despite growth of voluntary activities undertaken by corporations to become more sustainable, the government's regulatory systems are likely to affect this development (Marcus *et al.,* 2011).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 SUSTAINABILITY: WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN TO A BUSINESS?

"This agenda of sustainability and corporate responsibility is not only central to business strategy but will increasingly become a critical driver of business growth....I believe that how well and how quickly businesses respond to this agenda will determine which companies succeed and which will fail".

---- Patrick Cescau, CEO of Unilever (2010)

This question can be answered as if your business is not being managed with respect to environmental and social sustainability, the business will not be sustained. However, the converse is true too. The concept of sustainability can be traced back to the thirteenth century but in more recent times (Kamara *et al.,* 2006), this concept first started appearing in the environmental literature in the 1970s and since then it has attracted widespread attention worldwide. But, in actual, defining this concept is not straightforward because a number of diverse meanings can be identified. The connection between environment and development was first made in 1980 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature when they published the World Conservation Strategy and used the term sustainable development. World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) defined sustainable development as "meeting the human needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future ones to meet their own needs". Many researchers have explained 'Sustainability' in several different forms. Deloitte and Touche (1992) has defined business sustainability as "adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future". For instance, Jamieson (1998) argued about difference between people's thought and professional discourse for the meaning of sustainability and concluded the latter being more complex and technical. With little different view, Ottman (1998) argues that a strong commitment to environmental sustainability in product design and manufacture can yield significant opportunities to grow your business, to innovate, and to build brand equity. However, many researchers have pointed out that rapidly increasing economic activities worldwide is among the main reasons of environmental degradation, (Chiesa *et al.,* 1999) described the term sustainability was introduced to provide a means for handling the type of problems concerning the deteriorating relationship between

our global ecology and an ongoing economic development. Therefore, it can be said that if an economic system is sustainable it means that it does not exhaust the surrounding environment. Visser (2002) examined that businesses around the world have seen increased pressure to broaden the accountability of companies and industry as a whole beyond economic performance, for shareholders, to sustainability performance for all stakeholders. The author has argued that the concept of sustainability has grown in recognition and importance for the business. Faber *et al.*,(2005) argued that there is no conclusive definition of sustainability, however, the organizations that want to make the complex concept of sustainability a part of their business need to understand that sustainability is no longer perceived as an achievable goal, but as a continuing process of improvement, and requiring constant efforts. In another attempt to examine "the role of business" in "mainstreaming sustainable consumption", the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2008) has stressed the importance of "using marketing communications to influence consumer choice and behaviour." This report further suggests that marketing can help consumers to find, choose and use sustainable products and services by providing information, ensuring availability and affordability, and setting the appropriate tone through marketing communications. According to PwC (2008), the sustainability agenda is being widely recognized and accepted by businesses with making a commitment to incorporate social, environmental, economic and ethical factors into strategic decision – making. With increased importance and awareness internationally, sustainability is among a top priority for the businesses (Newell, 2009). Ekins (2011) suggested that pursuit of environmental sustainability should now take priority over that of economic growth because achieving this growth in the long term requires the environmental damage. The author also suggests the principles of environmental sustainability will need to maintain important environmental functions: (a) Source function – the capacity to supply resources, (b) Sink function – the capacity to neutralize waste, without incurring ecosystem change or damage, (c) Life-support functions – the capacity to sustain ecosystem health and function, and (d) Other human health and welfare functions – the capacity to maintain human health and generate human welfare in other ways. Paltasingh (2011) argued that in today's time there is no universally acceptable appropriate approach to sustainable development, however, a holistic environmental analysis can help in understanding ecological system and policies can be

redesigned to reduce environmental degradation. So, the discussion above clearly indicates that businesses today need to shift their focus from a narrow aspect of accelerating economic growth to a broader outlook of sustainable development. It is generally noticed that sustainable development is linked to environmental or natural resources. Hubbard (2011) argued that the issue of sustainability reporting has been emerging globally over the last 15 years. Many organizations in the world are now thinking sustainability reporting, although voluntary, is an important part of their performance assessment which covers environmental and social as well as economic aspects of an organization's performance.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RETAIL

A retailer is an intermediary between primary producers and manufacturers on the one hand and customers on the other. Many of today's environmental problems such as resource depletion, climate change, global warming, and CO_2 emission has rendered their awareness possible only through the media (Dunlap and Jones, 2002). Similarly, there are increasing pressures from the media, consumers, government and trade unions on retailing businesses to act responsibly and comprehensively to manage their waste in a sustainable way (Jones *et al.* 2005, Meriem and Ling, 2011). A report by DEFRA (2007) claimed that retailing sector individually generated the most waste, with nearly 13 million tonnes of waste. Bobe and Dragomir (2010) have argued that retailers around the world seem to be increasingly keen to communicate their sustainable commitment to their shareholders, customers and the general public. The author has also recognized that proving environmental responsibility of retailers is a big challenge because the retailers may be causing to the environment due to their core activities and operations, despite their environmental responsibility. Even publishing environmental reports may obtain a positive image despite the negative environmental impact of the retailer. So, consumer's understanding and behavior both are important while deciding whether they will buy the retailer's products or not. It is clear that organized retailing is quite energy intensive due to the size of its activities that have different potential impacts on the environment (Sinha, 2011). Jones *et al.* (2011 a) argues that today many large retailers are promoting sustainability publicly through reports for example, in annual reports, their sustainability agendas, commitments and achievements

for a variety of reasons etc. According to PwC's 14th Annual Global CEO Survey, half of the total CEOs surveyed around the world changing their business strategies triggered by shifting priorities and preferences toward environmentally friendly products or services. However, the most pioneered retailers are now working with their suppliers to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions throughout their supply chain. According to World Health Organization, Greenhouse gases, or "GHGs", such as carbon dioxide and methane present in the atmosphere have the ability to trap the infrared rays reflected by the Earth. The greater the quantity of GHGs, the more the atmosphere will heat up. In countries like the United States and Europe, there is an over-reliance on waste disposal to landfill. However, the condition of waste disposal is many developing countries are still not very advanced. There is a growing risk for industry in general and retailers in particular from the lack of complying with the shifts in the environmental landscape. The researchers, academicians and business practitioners have collectively promoted one of the possible solutions to control environmental impacts with sustainable consumption.

The United Nations Environment Programme (1995) defined sustainable consumption as "the use of services and related products that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations." Thompson (2007) suggested some ways by following which retailers can make changes in their operations to reduce carbon footprints through energy management to save money and resources. The study was carried out based on retailers in UK. The retailers can upgrade to low energy devices, may use LEDs and low energy bulbs for lighting, therefore use green energy to reduce energy consumption. Retailers must adopt some sustainable business practices in order to reduce their impacts on environment. Erol *et al.* (2009) argued that retailing companies have a huge potential to impact on sustainability performance of national economies. Believing this fact, the author developed sustainability indicators of performance evaluation for grocery retailing in terms of three sustainability aspects: social, environment, and economic. Most appropriate indicators for (a) environmental sustainability are – water consumption, energy consumption, category selection and management, and product and packaging recovery; (b) social sustainability are – customer complaints, occupational health and safety, NGO-retailer partnership, consumer

health and safety, private brands, training and career, and personnel turnover; and for (c) economical sustainability are – innovational capabilities and R&D expenditures, total payment made to employees, number of shareholders, total payments per share, and total tax paid. Similarly, a number of attempts have been made by many researchers to develop theoretical frameworks (Jones *et al.*, 2011a) connecting nature and society and to recognize that social and economic development cannot be viewed in isolation from the natural environment. For instance, Baharum and Pitt (2010) have summarized some critical success factors of retail store recycling initiatives and suggested waste recycling practices are expected to lead to cost improvements in service efficiency and performance level of retailer, therefore, minimizing the risk of environmental costs. Meriem *et al.* (2011) found that when discussing waste, retailers usually advocate for the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'. A report by United Nations Environmental Programme (2009) stated that world's annual consumption of plastic has increased more than 20 times (from around 5 million tonnes in the 1950s to nearly 100 million tonnes in 2000s). Plastic consumption has increased in developing countries in Asia and Pacific region more than rest of the world due to rapid urbanization and economic development, according to the report. The government too plays a very important role in promoting environment protection in any country. For instance, the State Council, China's parliament, responded in January 2008 by prohibiting shops, supermarkets, and sales outlets from providing free plastic bags that are less than 0.025 millimeters thick. And prior to the ban, an estimated 3 billion plastic bags were used daily across China, creating more than 3 million tons of garbage each year. Within just one year's gap from the day of ban, China reported 66 percent drop in plastic bag use. The Chinese supermarket consumers are now used to bringing along shopping bags and reusing plastic bags. In the United States, the San Francisco Plastic bags Reduction Ordinance resulted in a reduction of sixty million plastic shopping bags during the first year of Ordinance was introduced (Meriem *et al.*, 2011). In India, Delhi government banned the use, sale and storage of plastic bags in the city in 2009. According to the draft notification issued by Delhi government, no person, including shopkeepers, vendors, wholesalers, retailers and hawkers, will be allowed to sell, store or use the plastic carry bags. In 2010, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) summoned Shoppers Stop for allegedly using plastic bags which is banned in the national capital. To address these environmental issues, some effective

demarketing tools must be used. Kotler and Levy (1973) has defined de-marketing as the practice that "involves using marketing tools such as price hike, reducing distribution outlets or stock, education programs and/or reducing services". In India, for instance, in July 2011, Retailers Association of India (RAI) initiated to encourage prudent use of plastic carry bags by coordinating an initiative amongst its members. It has over 700 retailers as members in India. The retailers started charging customers for the plastic carry bags that are priced ranging from rupee 1 to rupees 7. Customers are given option of bringing their own bags. The results of a survey conducted by RAI showed over 50 percent decrease in the consumption of plastic carry bags, post this initiative, which is significant. Clearly, there are good reasons to encourage shoppers not to use plastic bags, but achieving this is a big challenge because the behaviors are entrenched and habitual. In order to reduce consumption of plastic bags, voluntary anti-consumption behaviour plays an important role whereby consumers voluntarily stop usage of plastic carry bags for shopping. But, past studies (Sharp *et al.,* 2010) revealed that the people are unlikely to adopt voluntary anti-consumption behaviour for habitual and frequent behaviour. It can be altered by offering some incentives to consumers. For instance, Bharti Retail and Hindustan Unilever Limited partnered to promote consumer awareness on plastic recycling. This program was launched in July, 2011 and named 'Go Recycle' in which the in-store displays, leaflets and mailers were used in all 31 Easyday and Easyday Market stores across National Capital Region to promote this recycling campaign run by the retailer. In 'Go Recycle' program of Bharti Retail, an incentive scheme was run to encourage the consumers for participating in this initiative. Consumers who bring empty plastic bottles and pouches of FMCG products of any brand that they purchase from the store will be awarded discount coupons at their stores which they redeem to buy any products of HUL brands. Such incentives can be helpful in educating consumers and to promote responsible consumption. Bobe *et al.* (2010) argued that proving environmental responsibility of retailers is a big challenge because the retailers may be causing to the environment due to their core activities and operations, despite their environmental responsibility. Moreover, publishing environmental reports may obtain a positive image despite the negative environmental impact of the retailer.

The following research questions as well as hypotheses are framed on the basis of literature review:

RQ1: Do retailers[1] understand their responsibility towards environment?

H1: Retailers do understand their responsibility towards environment.

RQ2: What initiatives do they (retailers) take to reduce their adverse impacts on environment?

H2: Retailers adopt sustainable business practices to reduce their adverse impacts on environment.

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA OF INTERNATIONAL RETAILERS

It is widely recognized that retailing is a diverse and dynamic industry offering a wide range of goods and services (Erol *et al.,* 2009) and most of the world's leading retailers (mainly organized retailers) were reporting sustainability agendas and achievements within the public reporting realm. For instance, Bobe and Dragomir (2010) analyzed [sustainable agenda] environmental policy and performance of five leading European retailers such as Tesco, J. Sainsbury, Carrefour, Groupe Casino, and Ahold and found all of these retailers are more or less involved in different practices to limit their environmental impacts. It shows that retailers' environmental statement or sustainability reports could be useful source for promotion. Jones *et al.* (2011 a) investigated sustainability reporting of world's eight leading retailers and described this practice in the similar fashion as "sustainable agenda" of retailers. Meanwhile, in another research Jones *et al.* (2011 b) emphasized on role of UK's leading food retailers in promoting "sustainable consumption" within store. Each of these studies emphasized on retailers' contribution in developing and promoting sustainable business practices that minimize their potential adverse impact on environment and exhibit their

[1] Organized Retailers in India

RQ = Research Question

H = Hypothesis

commitment towards sustainable development. Where sustainability reporting is more or less a voluntary exercise of major retailers, a number of earlier attempts have been made by few researchers to describe environmentally-friendly operations for retailers and termed it "green retailing" (Thompson, 2007; Robinson, 2007 and Lai *et al.*, 2010). So, the concept of "green retailing" found its space in literature in the recent past. Thompson (2007) proposed simple changes in retailers' operations and Robinson (2007) emphasized on the importance of green building or shopping centre to minimize their carbon footprints and energy consumption. The list of world's top 10 retailers for 2010 is given (Table 2) below.

Table 2: Top ten retailers in the world (Year 2010)

Company	**Country of Origin**	**Rank**	**Fiscal 2010 Retail Sales (US$ million)**	**CAGR Fiscal 2005 -2010(%)**
Wal-Mart	US	1	405,046	7.3
Carrefour	France	2	119,887	3.4
Metro	Germany	3	90,850	3.0
Tesco	UK	4	90,435	10.9
Schwarz	Germany	5	77,221	9.8
The Kroger Co.	US	6	76,733	6.3
Costco	US	7	69,889	8.2
Aldi	Germany	8	67,709	6.3
Home Depot	US	9	66,176	-2.0
Target Corp.	US	10	63,435	6.8

Source: www.deloitte.com.au

Lai *et al.*, (2010) examined the green practices in the retail business and suggested the retailers to manage and improve internal business processes adopting green utilization, and green transportation, extending it to external coordination for green product design, green packaging, and promotion, which are linked with supportive development through green policy implementation in the business. The author has made an attempt to know the role of retailers in fostering green retailing across value chain for sustainable development. Additionally, summary of sustainability issues of world's top eight retailers (Jones *et al.*, 2011a) based on economic, environment and social dimensions are also mentioned below (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of sustainability issues of world's top eight Retailers in year 2009

Issues	Retailer							
	Walmart	Carrefour	Tesco	Metro	Home Depot	Kroger	Target	Costco
Environmental								
Climate change and carbon emissions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Energy consumption	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Water management	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Waste management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Logistics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Conserving natural resources	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Environmentally friendly products	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land and property holdings	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Social								
Responsible sourcing	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Food safety	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Working conditions at suppliers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Diversity and equal opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Training and development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Health and safety	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local community links	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charitable giving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic								
Employment creation	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Value for customers	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Supplier relationships	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Building shareholder value	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Corporate governance	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗

Source: Jones *et al.* 2011

3.4 ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMERS

"Consumers are increasingly concerned about their own environmental impacts, those of the products they buy and those of the companies at which they shop. These concerns focus on physical impacts such as global warming and on broader social issues such as how their purchasing actions and choices affect the livelihoods of people in other countries". ***--- The Global Coca Cola Retailing Research Council Forum (2009)***

In order to know the consumers' perspective towards environmental issues and sustainability, it is essential to understand the extent of consumers' environmental concern. Initial research to understand consumer perceptions of environmental concern studied by using the broader term "socially-conscious consumers" (Kassarjian, 1971; Anderson and Cunningham, 1972) later used for explaining "ecological concern" (Kinnear *et al.*,1974) began in the 1970s. Many researchers, academicians, marketers, and other independent entities, thereafter, started showing their keen interest in establishing link between consumers' environmental concerns and their consumption behavior. Today, the terms such as "socially responsible", "environmentally-friendly", and "ethical consumption" behaviour are used in a conceptually similar manner and frequently found in the marketing literature (Antil and Benett, 1979). Among these, the narrower term "environmentally-conscious consumer" relates consumer consciousness specifically to physical and natural environment as opposed to social issues as a whole (Webster, 1975). The author tried to relate socio-demographics variables such as age, gender etc. to the environment concerns, focusing on consumer attitude and behavior towards environmental issues such as pollution, recycling and waste disposal and defined the socially-conscious consumer as "a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change". He has also characterized the socially-conscious consumer as a member of upper middle class and operates at a rather low key. Other researchers (Kinnear *et al.*, 1974 and Van Liere, 1980) have found the socially responsible consumer as younger, well-educated and belong to middle to upper class and predominantly female who is socially responsible and tend to be more involved in community activities. Kinnear *et al.* (1974) explained this issue in a different manner by taking into account "perceived consumer effectiveness" (PCE) which states that the efforts of an individual can make a difference in the solution to a given problem and can be effective in pollution abatement, which was, later studied and confirmed by researchers (Webster, 1975;

Antil, 1984; Ellen *et al.*, 1991) in the field of "socially-responsible consumption behavior" and environmental issues discussed earlier. Therefore, the concept of PCE states that consumers need to be empowered in performing any pro-environmental behaviour that leads to minimize the environment deterioration. Brooker (1976), on the other hand, used Abraham Maslow's theory of holistic approach to personality and has characterized the socially conscious consumer as "self-actualized" individual who may take actions which will satisfy the needs of others at the same time that individual's own needs are satisfies. Though, consumers' environmentally or ecologically conscious consumption behavior has been studied along with socially conscious behavior to know the market segments and demographic characteristics of consumers very specifically. Bohlen *et al.* (1993) argued that many environmental disasters and enhanced media coverage on environmental issues in the late 1980s have attracted public's interest in the environment. The author developed scale to measure individuals' ecological concern to address the gap between previously studied environmental issues based on conventional segmentation variables and need to develop valid and reliable indicators of ecological factors. Socially responsible consumption was measured with the help of Roberts' (1995) SRCB scale (Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior), environmentally conscious consumption was assessed with Roberts' (1996a) ECCB scale (Environmentally Conscious Consumer Behavior). Roberts (1995) found that consumers do distinguish between ecologically conscious and socially conscious behavior. So, it may be said that a consumer who exhibit his/her concern toward environment does not always act as socially responsible or vice versa. Followed by this research, the author (Roberts, 1996a) measured environmentally conscious behavior solely and found rapidly growing environmental concern of consumers. Memery *et al.* (2005) investigated typology of "ethical and socially responsible" grocery shoppers with seven different categories and found the consumer's store choice decision is primarily based on conventional factors such as convenience, price and range and least attention is given to issues related to ethical and socially responsible consumption. Francois (2006) described socially responsible consumer are those who promote social causes that deem important to them. Measures developed by Roberts (1993, 1995, and 1996a, b) for socially responsible consumption behavior was accepted widely among marketers to respond to the desires as well as demands of socially and environmentally responsible consumers (Webb *et al.*, 2008). Whereas, Megicks *et al.*

(2008) found that consumer's "Ethical and Socially Responsible" (ESR) shopping decisions vary in different situations, however, factors such as customer service, product quality and promotions are also important motivators even when they are looking for ethical and socially responsible solutions. The author has identified shopping motives for ESR products and store decisions where advertisement and communication plays dominating role in guiding shoppers. Phillips *et al.* (2011) suggested that consumers can express their concern for the environment with a wide variety of different behaviors, from recycling their newspapers, waste, and to riding a bike to work. Environmental concern has been an important topic for more than forty years and has recently become even more important with rising concerns about creating a sustainable and healthy environment (Royne *et al.,* 2011). In the previous attempts to measure consumer's environmental consciousness, the researchers have either developed or modified an already developed scale for measurements shown below (Table 4).

The following research questions and hypotheses are framed on the basis of literature review:

RQ3: Are consumers of retail stores concerned towards environmental issues?

H3: Consumers of retail stores are concerned towards environmental issues.

RQ4: How does a consumer's (of retail store) concern towards environmental issues affect his/her consumption behavior?

H4: The consumers of retail stores who are concerned towards environmental issues exhibit responsible consumption behavior.

Table 4: Summary of scales used to measure environmentally and socially responsible consumption behavior.

Author(s) & Year	Measure/Scale	Factors/Items/Important findings
Bohlen, Schlegelmilch and Diamantopoulos (1993)	Ecologically Concerned Consumer (ECC)	Perceived knowledge about specific environmental problems (11 item unidimensional scale); Attitudes towards environmental protection (20 item multi-dimensional scale); Non-purchase behavior (two dimensions- recycling activities and political action- 4 items each scale); Purchasing behavior (for two items- unleaded petrol and ozone-friendly aerosols- unidimensional 7 item scale).
Roberts (1995)	Socially Responsible Consumption Behavior (SRCB)	Ecologically conscious consumer behaviors- ECCB (17 items); Socially conscious consumer behaviors- SCCB (8 items); and Attitudinal Mean scores (Perceived consumer effectiveness, Liberalism, Alienation and Environmental concern).
Memery, Megicks and Williams (2005)	Ethical and Socially Responsible (ESR) issues in grocery Shopping	Food, drink and product safety, Animal welfare, Honest labelling, Advertising and promotions, Ethical trading, Human rights, The environment.
Francois-LeCompte and Roberts (2006)	Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC)	Corporate responsibility, country of origin preference, shopping at local or small businesses, purchasing cause-related products, and reducing one's consumption.
Megicks, Memery and Williams (2008)	Ethical and Socially Responsible (ESR) Shopping Behavior	No animal testing, Not dealing with oppressive regimes, Not exploiting developing countries, Importance of ozone layer and cfc's, No pollution from transportation, No intensive farming, Store employment policy, Supporting local community, Availability of organics, Free range, and fair trade.
Webb, Mohr and Harris (2008)	Socially Responsible Purchase and Disposal (SRPD) Scale	CSR performance, Consumer recycling behavior, Traditional purchase criteria, Environment impact purchase and use criteria.

4. RESEARCH GAP AND NEED OF THE STUDY

In the present scenario, many large retailers in the world such as Walmart, Carrefour, Tesco, Metro AG etc. identify, measure and disclose their social, economical and environmental indicators in their annual reports while very few of them do separately, through sustainability reporting. Though, there is significant knowledge already produced by researchers in this area, but no study, so far in Indian context, has particularly studied the issues and perspectives of retailers and consumers towards environmental sustainability. A review of the available literature suggests that considerable research has been conducted in the area of "Sustainability" globally, however, only a few researches in this area have been actualized in India, especially in organized retail industry. Moreover, there may be lack of attention towards sustainability as a measure of environmental protection by the organized retailers in India. Many studies have been conducted in the past particularly in other countries which have highlighted the role of retailers in promoting sustainable consumption and their impacts on consumers' buying behavior. Sinha (2011) investigated that climate change has become the most pressing problem for the mankind and people are now increasingly becoming aware of impact that their consumption can have on the environment. This ever growing environmental consciousness among people is influencing the retail business environment worldwide. Ishaswini & Datta (2011) suggested that shift towards more sustainable consumption is required and it is equally important to increase consumers' environmental consciousness. The need for recognizing the sense of environmental consciousness among consumers is important for bringing change in social as well as economic activities in the country. Worldwide increasing pressures on retailers to minimize their adverse effects on environment have led them to choose environmentally sustainable business practices. At the same time, it is equally important to determine consumers' knowledge towards environmental issues. In United States and Western European countries, the term "socially responsible consumption" occurs frequently in the literature of environmentally friendly consumers. For instance (Davis, 1993 and Webb, 2008) have reported the American consumers actively show their strong commitment to protect the environment and shown their willingness to change their behavior and buying habits in order to improve the environment. Roper (1992) reported that increasing number of Americans do read product labels to see if products are environmentally safe and boycott products of

companies that were careless toward environment, which reflects a significant shift in the orientation of American consumers toward the environment than a decade ago. In UK, Jones *et al.* (2011b) conducted survey based on ten leading food retailers who offer their customers very limited information on sustainability consumption within store. However, previous studies (Webster, 1975; Memery *et al.*, 2005) have confirmed UK consumers' environmental concern in consumption behavior. But, very little empirical study has been conducted in Asian countries, especially in India. There is a need to have well documented and systematic studies on the environmental sustainability in Indian retail industry. An empirical investigation is required to study the retailers' perspective and initiatives towards environmental sustainability and at the same time it is equally important to know how consumers of retail stores perceive importance of environmental issues.

4.1 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The present study is being carried out to fill up research gap discussed above. On the basis of research questions and hypotheses framed in literature review, the primary objectives of the study are to:

1. Know whether Indian organized retailers understand their responsibility towards environment.

2. Determine the extent to which organized retailers are integrating and managing environmental sustainability within their business.

3. Understand the relationship between environmental concern and responsible consumption behavior among consumers of organized retail stores.

4. Suggest organized retailers the effective marketing strategies addressing environmental sustainability issues in retail business.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (PROPOSED)

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY PROCEDURE AND PURPOSE

In this study, the main objective is to determine the extent of retailers' awareness and initiatives towards environmental sustainability in the National Capital Territory (Delhi) of India. This is an empirical study by nature in which the research design is a mix of exploratory as well as descriptive study. Malhotra and Dash (2011) suggested that qualitative and quantitative research in combination can provide rich insights which helps in formulating successful marketing strategies. Therefore, initially, a qualitative approach is required to gain insights of retailers' voluntary initiatives to reduce their adverse impact on environment. This approach will further help in instrument (questionnaires) design for the succeeding stages. One of the objectives in this study suggests that knowing the concern of retail store consumers towards environment is equally important. So, in the next stage, a separate survey of retail store consumers will be administered through a structured questionnaire. There are some already developed scales for measurement of environmental attitudes which are mainly in the context of other counties. Some items of those scales can be borrowed in order to develop new scales for measurement of responses. The descriptive research design will help in quantification of responses for interpretation of the results on the basis of which suitable suggestions can be made to the retailers. The main purpose of this research is to study the importance of and criteria for environmental sustainability among organized retailers in India. The concept of environment and sustainability started finding widespread attention of researchers and society in 1970s, with much of its focus in developed countries only. Most of the retailers in U.S, UK and in European countries include the agenda of sustainability in their annual reports and are taking some serious initiatives towards reducing their carbon footprints. But the lack of literature for similar investigation in the Indian organized retail industry provokes my attention towards present research. So, this research is designed to fill this gap and empirically study these variables in the context of Indian organized retail industry. Moreover, this research is likely to be valuable for organized retailers in India and it would help them to recognize the importance of environmental sustainability in their business and strengthen their competitive advantage.

5.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

Considering the nature of research objectives, qualitative as well as quantitative tools of research will be applicable. Therefore, a mixed methodology will be used. The study is qualitative in nature because a priori conduct of personal interviews from randomly selected organized retailers will help in gaining interesting insights. The initial conduct of qualitative approach will be utilized in preparing structured questionnaire. The consumers who are either responsible for household shopping or doing shopping for own self at organized retail outlets in National Capital Territory (Delhi) will also be surveyed in order to know their concern towards environmental issues. A separate survey of consumers is required to investigate the importance of various environmental issues among them. So doing, the gap will be recognized more clearly and retailers can be advised to take appropriate changes in their strategic decision making. For the purpose of this research, both primary as well as secondary source of data is required. The researcher has visited the following places for collection of secondary data (Table 5).

Table 5: Sources of secondary data collected for research

Visit No.	Date of Visit	Place of Visit	Nature of Data Collected
1	01 Dec, 2011	Panjab University, Chandigarh	• Reviewed two theses in the context of organized retailing in India. • Collected some research papers and theses from digital library for researchers.
2	02 Dec, 2011	Management Development Institute, Gurgaon	• Accessed digital library to collect research papers and theses from different databases. • Reviewed one thesis related to green marketing practices in India.
3	03 Dec, 2011	NASSDOC (Indian Council of Social Science Research), New Delhi	• Reviewed and collected three working papers on environment sustainability. • Accessed digital library for collecting research papers and theses.

In addition to the sources stated above, the researcher access relevant web-sites, magazines, newspapers, books, and online database 'Ebsco' within the University for downloading various research papers and reports. For the purpose of collecting primary data, initially, the research design begins with exploratory research that is qualitative in nature (see step 1 and 2 below) and helps in figuring out appropriate items for survey instrument or designing scale(s) for measurement of responses. Step 3 belongs to descriptive research design, whereby, the responses will be ascertained from consumers as well as retailers to quantify the results. The step-wise criteria of research design and data collection are mentioned below (Table 6). For data analysis, appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation etc. will be applied.

Table 6: Summary of research design and data collection procedure

Step	Target population	Purpose of data collection	Sampling technique	Instrument for data collection	Size of sample	Scope of study
1	Organized retailers/ companies	Finalization of scale items	Judgmental sampling	Personal interviews of company representatives	10 companies	NCT of Delhi
2	Organized retailers/ companies	Actual responses of retailers	Stratified random sampling	Structured questionnaire	25-30 retailers	
3	Representative sample (consumers of above selected organized retailers in step 2)	Actual responses of consumers	Judgmental sampling (Mall intercept)	Structured questionnaires	640 Respondents[2] (consumers of organized retail stores)	

[2] Calculated through survey random sample calculator accessed from: http://www.custominsight.com/articles/random-sample-calculator.asp

Population in NCT of Delhi (above 7 years age) = 14782725 (as per census, 2011)

At Sample error = 5%, People need to complete survey at 95% Confidence level = 384

Estimated response rate is expected to be 60% So, actual number of respondents need to survey = 640

The step-wise research procedure is given below: -

Step 1. Ten major organized retailers or companies having their outlets/operations in NCT of Delhi will be selected on the basis of judgmental sampling technique and their representatives will be interviewed using a structured but flexible research process.

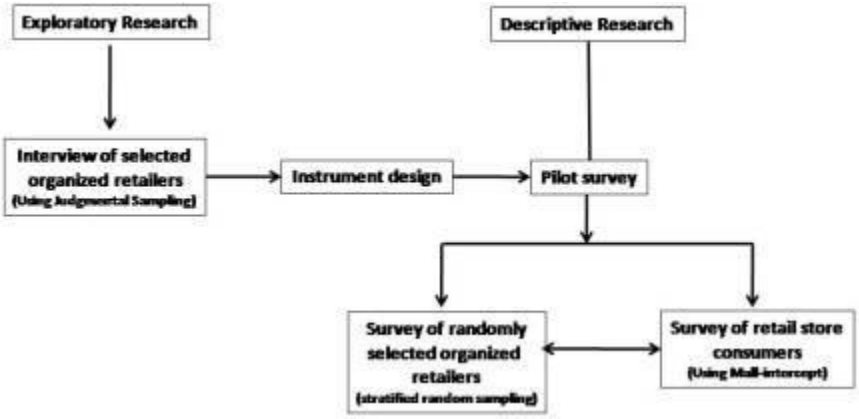
Purpose: The main purpose of conducting Step 1 research procedure is to gain insights and understanding of retailers' course of action towards minimizing their adverse impacts on environment in order to ensure environmental sustainability.

Step 2. Approximately 25-30 organized retailers of different categories and formats, in NCT of Delhi will be selected through stratified sampling technique for data collection using a structured questionnaire.

Purpose: The main purpose of conducting step two research procedure is to make a comprehensive investigation from different organized retailers in order to ascertain their actual withstanding and perspective towards environmental issues. The responses, thus quantified and analyzed, will be used for interpretations and suggestions to the retailers.

Step 3. A larger pool of representative sample, that is approximately 640 respondents who are the consumers of organized retail store (as per selected in Step 2) will be interviewed through a structured and formal questionnaire using "Mall-intercept" survey method.

Purpose: The main purpose of this step is to obtain responses from consumers of organized retail stores in order to measure their environmental consciousness.



5.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The sampling will be confined to randomly selected trade areas to control response variation due to trade area competitive differences (Bucklin, 1967). For the purpose of defining sampling design process, first it is necessary to define scope of the study. This research will be carried out in “National Capital Territory of Delhi". The capital of India is considered to be second largest metropolitan city after Mumbai. According to Census (2011), current population of New Delhi is 16753235 in which population aged 7 years and above is 14782725. Literacy Rate in Delhi is 86.34 per cent (91.03 per cent males and 80.93 females). NCT of Delhi has highest population density in the country that is 11297 per sq. km which has increased from 9340 sq.km in 2001. In the recent past, Government of Delhi, in order to protect the environment, has implemented stringent rules under Environment Protection Act. For instance, Shopper Stop, a popular retail chain, has been summoned for allegedly using plastic carry bags which is banned in the national capital. There are a number of similar incidents happened in Delhi due to which the retailers are now expected to be aware of environmental issues and must be take them into consideration while operating their businesses. A large number of real estate developments are being taken place across India. Pataskar (2011) argued that a number of large real estate developers in India including DLF, Prestige Group, Mantri Builders, Ansal Properties have announced projects in the retail mall segment and they are primarily focusing on Delhi and Mumbai because these markets have emerged as the most lucrative consumer markets in Asia. Moreover, there are other important reasons behind selecting NCT of Delhi for this study as followings:

- According to a report by Knight and Frank (2010), during 2009-12, the organized retail market in India will grow at the rate of 31 per cent per annum and National Capital Region (NCR) alone has about 17.87 million sq. ft. mall space which is highest in India.

- Delhi is the oldest retail hub in northern India and among the most sought after shopping destinations in the country.

- Over the last 5-6 years, various newer organized retail formats have emerged in Delhi.

Map of NCT of Delhi

Source: Census of India, 2011. http://www.censusindia.gov.in

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